the taint of death in the flowing river, we turned and once more climbed the path to the village.

The muffled sound of a gunshot came to us as we sat in the hut of the headman, speaking of the funeral. "Another child gone," he said, "Soon he will be safe in the earth."

We had not been permitted to go across the river to witness the burial. "It is a dangerous place for those who do not know it," the headman said. "*Ogi*—evil things—are there, bad spirits who harm those who are not prepared, and we do not want evil to come to you. Several years ago there was a Bakra here when we buried another Gankwe man. He asked to go, and we granted him his wish. But the spirits of the bad bush across the river harmed him and he died, and now his ghost plagues us."

A second shot told us that the bearers had reached the grave after their march through the deep bush where living man seldom came. They had sung the *papa siagi*—the dirges—which are intoned as the dead is borne to the grave. Once arrived there and the invocations pronounced, the salute fired, and the gods propitiated, two men would descend into the deep hole there to lift down the coffin and place it in the tunnel-like excavation dug under the undisturbed earth to the side of the large opening; would place it so that the falling earth might not disturb the spirit of the dead.

A third shot.

The body was in the grave. The heaping of earth, with the burial hoe, with feet, and with fingers, back into the hole that had been so laboriously dug had commenced. The sun was getting low and darkness comes early in the big bush.

Now the last shot told us of the final ceremony. The food that had been brought for the last offering was being placed on the mound of heaped-up earth. The strip of white cloth to the spirit was being pushed into the ground on its stick. The burial party was backing away from the grave, slowly, slowly, so that the spirit would not be alarmed, so that it

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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THE ARTIST OF MA'LOBBI

As we walked toward the chief's house we looked about us, seeing again the evidence that here at Ma'lobbi there were men who knew how to carve wood, seeing why it was that our paddlers had spoken of it as a place for fine work.

"Ai, at Ma'lobbi they are good carvers."

Here was a house with its doorposts elaborately carved; there a beautifully worked rice tray, lying where it had been left by the woman who owned it, until she should need it later in the day for winnowing her rice; farther along a great bench stood, with the designs cut through in a fluid progression over top and sides.

The captain was in the lower portion of his two-story house when we entered. Several of the older men, who had been present at our earlier visit and who remembered our gifts of tobacco, came to join us, as the news of our arrival spread through the village. Soon the women were standing about, motioning to the white woman to come with them.

The house in which the captain received us was larger and more imposing than the others in the village. It was his *gudu-wosu*—his treasure house. Its lower portion, where we sat in conversation with him, was where he worked. Above, where none of his wives might enter, his wealth was stored. Here he kept the pieces he had carved, and from here drew from time to time the presents he gave his wives. Here lay the wealth which his nephews would inherit when he died. But below, in the partially open shelter, was his workshop where he fashioned rough logs into stools and paddles, combs and food stirrers, trays and canoe seats, and all manner of objects which he and his women used in their daily routine.

All about the walls hung tools. There were machetes, whose sharp blades showed a reflection of fire from the sun which slanted on the wall. We had never seen so many of these bush knives on display, nor, for that matter, such an array of tools anywhere on this river. From projecting boards or nails driven into posts hung several compasses, their hinged arms sharp-pointed, so that the craftsman might describe the perfect circles on the wood he carved.

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This they had learned from the whites long ago, and now everywhere on the river compasses were seen, or carvings which showed their use. The machete, the small sharp knives which lay about here on the work-table, the compass, and sand made up any Bush Negro carver's tools. But here at Ma'lobbi in this workshop of the captain were tools from the white man's city, collected by himself on his journeys down to the government office to receive his yearly allowance, or by his men who had been to the French shore and learned of the ways of the outside world. There was a plane to make the blade of a paddle smooth as the skin of a child, and there were two others in addition to this one, we were assured, in the treasure house of the upper story. Hammers, too, were useful for making boats, and even for smaller carvings like benches. There was also a bit and auger, though we were never convinced that the captain himself had ever put it to its more prosaic uses.

"I have many more up there," said the captain, pointing to the upper story. "I like them. If a man likes his tools, then they help him in his carvings. As he sees with his eyes, so they cut. I have always liked my tools, white man. I have spent much time with them."

A young man sat to one side shaving down a block of wood with a knife which he held.

"He is not carving," the captain said, following our eyes. "He is making a piece for this," he explained, indicating a plane. "Now is not the time for carving. There is too much to be done. This is the time for cutting wood, for taking the rafts down the river, for making boats, for bleeding rubber trees for the white man, and for hunting game. When the great rains come, then men sit about and carve."

As he spoke our eyes traveled to the various carvings which stood about the workshop. In one corner leaned a paddle which caught our attention because of its darkened color, and the patina which long use had given it, so that it seemed made of ebony. Against another wall were several stools, all richly ornamented with carvings, while beside us,

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person, to act for her. But always hers was the final word, and often that word when the time came for us to carry away the piece was "No."

"It was made for me by my husband when I was a young girl. Now he sleeps, he is no more. I want to have it," was a statement which ended all bargaining.

Sometimes even after we had paid the woman, and stored the piece away, she returned with the moist coins in her hand, asking for the carved implement.

"Before some man from here will go to the city to buy me a pangi, I may lose the money, or he may lose it on the way. But if the clothes beater is here, I can use it and look at it. I want to keep it."

One vivid incident of bargaining concerned a peanut pounding board which had belonged to the sister of Bassia Anaisi. We were sitting and talking with him and his grandmother, when our eyes rested on his sister's house. From a projection hung a strikingly beautiful piece of carving. The rectangular portion of the board on which the peanuts were crushed was bordered on top and bottom with filigreed carving. It was made of brown-heart wood with inlays of purple-heart. Bassia Anaisi's sister supplemented our guesses of what the designs meant. The top represented a woman's head and headdress. The small brass nails, which made a glistening line in the center of the upper curve, were the cicatrizations on the woman's face.

"Look," said the woman, "she is a woman, but a woman hawk. Here is her neck, and the small cut-out circles here are her breasts, those curves at both ends are the wings. The very small nails are the cicatrizations on the thighs. She is a woman, and she has made herself beautiful. This large rounded portion is her belly, and the smaller one underneath is the *gonu mofo*—the gun's mouth," the last being their image for the vagina. Meeting this from the bottom curving upwards was a half-circle, which represented the male member. At the other end was more embellishment. In the center was a double curve to symbolize the first phase of the moon. Below were two "*Ingi Kodyo*,"

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Indian cudgels, a figure of speech for the buttocks, in this instance those of the woman, and again the male representation. This was edged with a border of deep curves which the woman said was mere ornamentation—scrolls. On another pounding board, however, of this village, a similar border was said to represent the boa constrictor. This board stood on two legs, each the width of the board and about two inches high, and worked in the same cut-through scroll design.

When we suggested that we might care to acquire the board, the woman became apprehensive. She took up the board, and excusing herself, disappeared with it inside her hut.

"No, no," she called from the house, when her brother went to tell her of the offer we had made for it. "I don't want money for it. I like it. I will not sell it."

The sum we offered was modest enough, but not inconsiderable for this deep interior. We increased it, then doubled our original offer. There was still no wavering on the woman's part, but the offer began to interest her family. Such wealth should not be refused. Bassia Anaisi began to urge her in our behalf.

"With this money you can buy from the white man's city a hammock, and several fine cloths. You should not refuse this."

The old woman took up the discussion, then another sister, and a brother. At last the bassia took us aside, and asked us to leave his sister alone with them.

"We will have a krutu, and tomorrow you will hear. She is foolish not to sell. But she cares for the board. It is good, too, when a woman loves what her man has carved for her. We will krutu about it, and you shall hear."

Three days passed before the woman's permission was given to dispose of the piece.

"When they see this, your people will know our men can carve!" she exclaimed in a voice which held as much regret as pride.

/10 cont./

574 The politeness shown toward a guest springs from the idea that unknowingly one of them might easily take the very piece that the important person wished to have, and although no comment would be made on this, it could nonetheless happen that this would trouble the guest for whom they cherish special respect, 888 or that he would thereby consider himself insulted. It is particularly to old age that they pay great respect.

Chapter VI

Household and Agricultural Implements

412 [322] [824] [531] The Bush Negroes mainly use adzes in order to hew their corjalen or canoes out of trees partially burned out beforehand; furthermore, they use planes and chisels in order to work their (usually cedarwood) (1) stools and parels or paddles (2). They are

1. Cedrela odorata L.

2. Hand oar.

especially fond of having these carved with many figures. For them the machete is an indispensable tool that they always carry around and use as a chopping knife, sword, and knife, indeed, even to cut splinters or thorns out of the foot with the tip. They use field axes or hatchets to cut down the bush in order to lay out their small cultivation grounds and to work the wood that they float by rafts and sell.

562 412 [824] [413] The women possess, aside from a machete or knife, also mattocks with which they keep their lands and the place near the dwelling neat; they make brooms from the pina palm racemes or from rice ears bound in sheaves. They like to have scissors, needles, and pins, while for knitting they use a pointed and bent nail.

413 [283] [286] They spin their sewing thread from cotton with a certain tool which they call kéké; they also have a round, wooden tool called sepoe, with which they very nicely and sturdily /11/ make

/11 cont./

286 garments /pandjes/ or articles of dress and other knitted goods.
[413] They also know how to make very attractive hammocks of cotton.

Chapter VII

Food, Drinks, Delicacies, and so forth.

262 [252] Their daily food is mainly rice and cassava (1) bread which

1. Sweet cassava, the farina from the root of the Janipha manihot, not to be confused with Jatropha manihot, which gives the bitter cassava, which, however much is removed by boiling and continued washing, contains a very poisonous component.

is baked on an iron plate and provides a tasty food that can be [241] kept for a long time. During the dry season, the months of September, October, and November, the ground also supplies them with a very mealy and tasty tuber called nappi (2); throughout the year,

2. Dioscorea sativa and Dioscorea alata L.

however, they grow yams, sweet potatoes (3), tayers (4), and cassava.

3. Convolvulus batatas L. and Batatas edulis Choisy.

4. Root from Arum esculentum.

[439] They have bananas only from time to time, whenever they exchange them on plantations for squared wood, which they pur- [433] posely work for this exchange. They know how to obtain wild game [263] and fish in great quantities; salt is an article greatly in demand.